

## More from Shelley

### I'm back!!! we have electric again!

\*We are raising money for our school....making original Christmas pressies too!! Baking and baking today...the children loved salad cream choc cake!!

*\*Ok folks, let me tell you about nature walks in Zim with my children- they include finding a snake, huge millipedes, stick insects, locusts, crickets, chameleons, lizards, huge beetles and then children wanting to roast some of them and sprinkle with salt for a snack.....very different from UK bug hunts but lots of fun still!*

\*Had a very busy day and very happy to have had lots of visitors including two of our big boys- Lucky is back, Tanashe visited and is enjoying life on the 'outside'! Banana cake made, pumpkin scones made, our own little art gallery in my kitchen and a clean house!! Yippee!

*\*Very tired but we are almost ready for graduation- very excited children and more cakes and jelly made today. Hoping for electricity so we can really enjoy the day!*

\*Nov 25<sup>th</sup> Graduation and nativity was great - amazingly the children were saying "taguta" (I'm full) after the party and thanks to Darnall Road Baptist Church, Sheffield - the clown you paid for was brilliant! Now sat in a huge storm with no electricity and aching feet but happy that the kids have had a very special day

*\*I've been training staff about the learning environment and having transformed classrooms by the end of the day it's a good result! Still lots to do but we now have our own toilets at last!*

**Christmas cards** – have you paid for yours yet? Please send your payment to the chairman as soon as possible.

Once again we have had an excellent response from people and a huge thank you to all of you who send an extra donation with your card payment.

**It is now time to renew your membership for 2012. Please send it to the secretary**

### Contacts

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Catch up with our website  
[www.friendsofmatthewrusike.org](http://www.friendsofmatthewrusike.org)

This newsletter is distributed by  
**The Friends of Matthew Rusike  
Children's Home.**



## Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home

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**December 2011**

### Visit to MRCH

Our welcome at MRCH was warm and friendly, everyone was so pleased to have more visitors. We stayed in the guest house with Shelley and Rebecca, a university student volunteer on placement for 2 months and Shelley is the Mission Partner who will be at the Home until 2013. We had time to meet all the staff and get to know firsthand a lot about life at the Home.

Don worked with Jullius, the maintenance and storesman, fixing broken cupboards, installing new kitchen counters and chalkboards for the classrooms. I interviewed all the staff about their jobs and asked them if they could identify any areas for development. From their comments we have been able to identify areas needing support and I am in the process of producing a document of the interviews including photographs.



We met with the Presiding Bishop, Rev Amos Ndhumbi and the National Board and agreed to

exchange minutes of meetings and accounts information with them. It was an excellent opportunity to tell them about the diversity of FoMRCH and all the generous support you all give.

***We give support, mainly by cash, but also by advice and assistance for the benefit of the Children***

Astonishment emphasised the importance of the regular remittances we send every 3 weeks enabling him to budget and plan ahead, to keep enough food and essential items in store for 3 months ahead and ask for children to start school on time even if he can't pay the fees immediately.



Shelley and Rebecca were setting up one of the new rooms at the Early Childhood Development Centre (ECD). This

involved washing toys, printing photos of the children and setting up a traditional 'home' corner and carpeted play area.



We visited 3 of the several outreach projects. 2 urban centres in Harare, well attended and expanding, are

built on church premises and are now growing their own food and planning to have poultry projects.

In all the centres hot meals are cooked daily for the children in the purpose built outside kitchen and preschoolers are cared for on the site while their older sibling carers go to school



We also visited a new rural centre being built at Donga, near Gweru. This is situated near a school which is attended by children living within a



15km radius (this being the maximum distance accepted as reasonable for a child to walk to school.) The well is dug, the kitchen is built, most of the bricks have been made and foundations started.

Children attending all the centres are identified by local trained volunteer carers, as being vulnerable and

needing support. Facilities are available for a child to stay on site for 2 weeks while staff try to trace any extended family able to care for them. Usually this will happen within the 2 weeks but if no family can be traced then, through a court order, the child is placed in residential care at MRCH. Staff continue to search for families or foster families are found who will care for them during school holidays.

The projects in Bulawayo were just too far away for us to get there in our limited time, maybe next time!

We met Jill Baker and 6 Australians who all visited MRCH while we were there. Jill is the UK president of Methodist Women in Britain and as she is travelling around Britain in her year of office she is talking enthusiastically about her visit to MRCH. Please look at their website for the report of her visit. [www.mwib.org.uk](http://www.mwib.org.uk)

The Australians were from the Uniting World branch of the Uniting Church in Australia. They sponsor the pig, poultry and tailoring projects at MRCH supporting MRCH and local vulnerable families living in Epworth. 2 of them were on their way to stay for 3 months at another project they support in Zambia. We shall stay in touch with them through our newsletter.

*There is **much more** information and photographs from our visit in 2 illustrated reports which are **available on request**. One is about the staff and their aspirations for development, giving **insight** into how MRCH 'works' and may give ideas for*

***projects to support, the other is about becoming a volunteer at MRCH.***

***Contact the chairman for copies.***



**From Shelley's Facebook**

**Children are learning how to cut with our new scissors!**

**The children have loved having a go at painting too!**

Here's the 'only in Africa' moment of the day, one of our boys fell over and needed to go to the clinic to check if it was a break or a sprain....no transport, so he had a piggy back from the chicken keeper on a pushbike. Luckily he came back very happy with a bandaged foot!

**Attended MRCH secondary school prize giving day...they certainly know how to celebrate success! I was very proud of all our students and staff!**

### News from Friends activities

Margaret Sanderson from Orpington reports on a sponsored knit "a brilliant idea"

"We gathered one Saturday morning, 17 of us round a large table, knitting squares for blankets,

(40 sts to a row on no8 or 4mm needles, being sponsored by the row or just a total) We knitted for 2 hours with a half hour break for coffee. It was easy to get sponsors because it was for a Children's home in Zimbabwe – magic words! – and we could ask people who had nothing to do with our church. I personally went round people I knew at the National Trust property where I work as a volunteer in the shop once a week, neighbours I know and people I meet regularly each week at the hairdressers. I found people were very generous and raised £301. But...the grand total from all our knitters was £2,386 plus another possible £100 from gift aided cheques. Most of the squares were sewn together as a double blanket and it was draped over the Communion table as part of our Harvest Festival display."

*Well done Margaret and your knitting team, what a wonderful achievement and fantastic total. I bet you all had a good natter as you knitted. Thanks to you all. Ed*



**Gainsborough Methodist church** achieved a wonderful final total - £4,060. Thanks to you all and Joan Sanger in particular for a fantastic year of fundraising. Ed